



WINDSOR VOLUNTEER AMBULANCE, INC.

P.O. Box 508

Windsor, Connecticut 06095-0508

Public Health Committee
Room 3000, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

March 14, 2013

Written Testimony:

HB No. 6518 AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Submitted by:

Daniel P. Savelli, Chief of Operations
Windsor Volunteer Ambulance, Inc.
20 William Street
Windsor, CT 06095

We appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony on 2013 HB No.6518

Windsor Volunteer Ambulance Inc. is adamantly against HB No. 6518. We believe that this bill will provide long term damage to the EMS Community in Connecticut and more particularly volunteer, non-profit and independent 3rd services, which make up the majority of 911 services in the state. This bill as written will decrease competition and could put communities at risk. We agree that improvement is needed and necessary with regards to current legislation pertaining to Emergency Medical Services in our state, but feel this will deprioritize patient care in favor of fiscal saving and politics.

Municipalities should be involved in their EMS service delivery but many communities do not have the experience, resources or competencies to properly evaluate how their current system is performing. The focus then becomes a matter of cost and not value and while there needs to be a balance, Emergency Services should not be devalued and patients put at risk for "cheaper" service. Since there are so many different communities with varying needs in the state, towns should be actively involved in service delivery but this bill empowers them with action only and no tools or information to do so.

This bill also provides no consistent, measurable or objective means to determine or compare services, if a municipality wanted to properly evaluate providers. This leads to uncertainty and volatility for many services that will make it impossible to attract long term or invested volunteers or employees, on which their system relies. There is no objective party to provide oversight in these decisions if there was a dispute. As EMS in the State of Connecticut is not elastic due to financial and legislative constraints, it will make any long term investment or planning nearly impossible which will result in negative patient care and further strained EMS systems.

Since many small services receive minimal to no funding from the town, they rely on billing and donations. If a PSA is awarded to a low bidder, most of these agencies would have no means to survive beyond the reassignment which would effectively decrease the number of providers in the state. This would decrease competition which would allow costs to be driven up over the long term. This will also discourage EMS organizations from being invested in communities and providing many intangibles beyond the trip to the hospital.

"... of ourselves we give so others may live."

From the perspective of cost control, municipalities have the ability to fund (or not) EMS currently unless engaged in a contract. Usually it is additional requirements the town is requesting that drives up the cost to deliver services. The cost issues stem from a lack of reimbursement and the legislative constraints relating to EMS delivery. Until that is remedied there will not be significant savings regardless of provider.

If open competition is a benefit for Emergency Medical Services, why is this not the case with Police and Fire? I do not believe there are EMS Services in this state that cost more than their police and fire departments in the same community. This is because they are vital safety services and require large investments in infrastructure to properly protect a community. EMS should not be treated any different if you would like to provide quality services to the community.

Enacting HB 6518 will empower municipalities to select an EMS provider based on political, financial and special interest reasons while deprioritizing patient care and negatively effecting the landscape of EMS in the State of Connecticut. Over time this will allow for the few providers left to create a monopoly in most regions of Connecticut and municipalities will not have options for service nor services invested in their best interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel Savelli". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'D' and 'S'.

Daniel P. Savelli
Chief of Operations
Windsor Volunteer Ambulance, Inc.